

Duxbury to State: Hear Us on Pilgrim

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

It's time for state and federal officials to take seriously Duxbury's concerns about the Pilgrim nuclear power plant, selectmen decided this week. They plan to write letters requesting action on issues of security, evacuation, and dispensing the town's stockpile of potassium iodide.

Selectmen will review drafts of the letters at their meeting next week. They plan to incorporate information that the Duxbury Nuclear Advisory Committee presented Monday night.

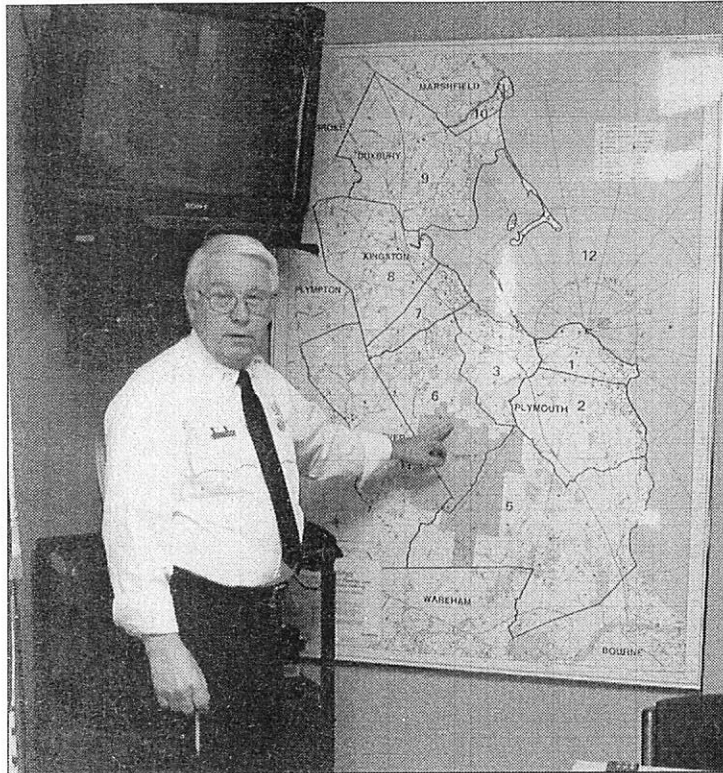
This information includes efforts by the committee and Duxbury fire chief to request the state allow the town to dispense its stockpile of potassium iodide (KI) inside the evacuation reception center in

Braintree. According to Nuclear Advisory Committee chairman, Mary Lampert of Washington St., state officials refuse to allow potassium iodide to be distributed inside, because the state's policy is to provide the pills only for emergency workers and people in institutions, such as prisoners. Instead, the state's plan is to park a Duxbury fire truck on a public street outside the evacuation center to distribute the pills to residents (and others, Lampert argues). Potassium

iodide is a proven thyroid-blocking agent that can prevent thyroid cancer if taken before or shortly after exposure to radioactivity. Town Meeting 2000 approved \$5,000 to stockpile 20,000 pills. According to the committee, potassium iodide is a safe, over-the-counter drug approved by the Federal Drug Administration. It is not sold in stores but is available over the Internet.

Lampert and the committee

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Fire Chief Bill Harriman points to the 10-mile emergency protection zone around Pilgrim nuclear power plant at the town's emergency operations center. The Clipper met with Chief Harriman this week to review the town's emergency plans. See story on page 4.

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want residents to receive potassium iodide pills inside the reception center at Braintree High School where the exposure to radioactive contamination would be less than outside. Also, KI is time-dependent. It provides better thyroid protection if it is taken just before or shortly after exposure to radioactive materials. "If it is not there, we will not be protected," stated the committee in a memo to selectmen. Also, dispensing of KI inside will allow a more orderly way for Duxbury residents to show their KI permission slips and will help prevent non-residents from obtaining the pills.

Another issue of concern to selectmen is the transportation of Duxbury's students and others to Braintree. The state is responsible for transporting all people who need it to the reception center at the Braintree High School. The state makes contracts with transportation providers. The Nuclear Advisory Committee is requesting that two changes be made to the emergency plans on file with the state.

First, it wants the town to report to the state the number and location of "transportation-dependent" people, such as children in day care, schools, camps, senior citizens on their

Kearney also felt "the time has come to have civil defense drills again." She had them when she went to Duxbury High School. She also was adamant that high school students be informed about evacuation procedures.

"The high school kids should be in on the planning," Kearney said.

Lampert agreed that the high school emergency drills and informing students were good ideas, but she felt the transportation companies should also be required to drill to see if their vehicles could make it to the schools in time.

Another committee idea that received selectmen's support was to monitor children for radioactivity in the reception center before transferring them to a host center or before taking them to the host center directly from Duxbury. The state prefers to transfer school children out before there is a radioactive release, as a precaution, stated the committee. Therefore, they could go to the host facility at Braintree High School directly as no radioactive contamination would have occurred.

However, the committee feels that monitoring each student before they arrive at the host center would show any radioactive contamination.

"In the worst situation, they are contaminated," stated the

protection from sea attacks.

Lampert and others, including retired United Airlines pilot John Anderson, proved to themselves just how vulnerable Pilgrim is to a water attack when they took an older fishing vessel from Duxbury to the waters just outside the power station. (See story on page XS --Ed)

Lampert is requesting Swift provide 24 hour Coast Guard protection of Pilgrim's 500 yard water perimeter and also provide signs in the ocean warning boaters to stay away. She would also like a floating barrier to prevent boats from getting close to the plant. Current efforts include Coast Guard broadcasts about the security zone on a VHF channel and an occasional drive-by, according to Lampert.

"Governor, the consequences of an attack are unimaginable," Lampert wrote to Swift. "However, the unimaginable happened on September 11th. Therefore, we are counting on you to see that the National Guard and Coast Guard are placed on site at our nuclear plants."

others without any transportation. This report is to show the state how many people need the transportation and what types are needed, such as handicapped accessible vans.

Second, the committee wants the state to show the town letters of agreement between the state and transportation companies. This information should confirm that the company has drivers trained and willing to go to Duxbury during an emergency. It would also include the number, capacity, and location of available vehicles, as well as the number of available drivers.

"Currently these procedures are not being implemented," stated the committee in a memo to selectmen. "We believe these two procedures must be in place in order for the town of Duxbury to have reasonable assurance that the transportation providers exist and will meet our needs."

Selectman Margaret Kearney said: "The planning is absolutely critical." But, she added: "the reality is kind of a joke. Who is going to come into town after a (radioactive) emergency. The time has come to think of an alternative."

She suggested having high school students and school staff and teachers load up their cars with children to make the trip to Braintree.

monitor will tell the story. Then, then can be decontaminated and treated. The sooner treatment is administered, the better their chances are. As important, they will have a record to carry forward to assist in their future medical care. This will increase the likelihood of early detection of future health-related problems and successful treatment. In the best situation, the monitor will indicate that they are clean. This knowledge will bring future peace of mind."

Dr. Eileen Williams, superintendent of schools, stated in a letter to selectmen that she and the school committee unanimously support monitoring Duxbury students at a reception center.

Selectmen will call for tighter security at Pilgrim too. Just last week, Gov. Jane Swift sent enough National Guardsmen to provide four round-the-clock perimeter guards. However, Lampert and the committee feel this is only one step in beefing up security.

"Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station is vulnerable from attack by land, air and sea," wrote Lampert to Swift.

Lampert wants the Federal Aviation Administration to make air space over nuclear power plants into a "no-fly zone." She also believes that Pilgrim needs better security